

mann and Ipolyi, cannot be demonstrated to have come from Hungary, and nor can the manuscript [Cod. Ital. 3.] in which was painted a miniature of the statue of the dead horse of Justinian I. However, among the returned Corvinas, there are some – such as the Tacitus codex – which preserve traces of the hand of János Vitéz, Archbishop of Esztergom, who read the texts carefully, and made occasional corrections.

(Árpád Mikó)

Imre Henszlmann and the Institutional Conservation of Monuments (1872–1888)

In 1867, Hungary became an independent, constitutional monarchy, and continued to function as a dual entity with the Austrian Empire. The altered political circumstances meant that countless new administrative and judicial tasks needed to be organized, and Imre Henszlmann, as a representative in the national assembly, took part in the preparatory work. The new state system also demanded fundamental changes in cultural life, and required the establishment of institutions which had not previously existed. Among these was the creation of an independent office for the conservation of Hungarian monuments.

Henszlmann submitted his first draft of a law on the protection of monuments in Hungary on 16 December 1869. In February 1871 – taking into account amendments suggested by Arnold Ipolyi and Flóris Rómer – he produced a bill for the creation of a national inspectorate for monument protection. The Provisional Commission of Hungarian Monuments (MMIB) was formed on 4 April 1872, chaired by Ágoston Szalay. The first official was Imre Henszlmann, his architect was Frigyes Schulek, and his colleagues included Arnold Ipolyi, Flóris Rómer, Imre Steindl and Ferenc Pulszky. The newly-formed institution considered its most important task to draw up a register of monuments, and the results were presented in a major exhibition in 1880. Proposed by Henszlmann, the first Hungarian act of law on monument conservation was passed by the National Assembly on 28 May 1881, paving the way for a permanent organization to be set up, the National Commission of Monuments (MOB).

As an official in charge of monuments, he partly continued coordinating the excavation and restoration works he had begun before the Commission was set up (Eger, Pannonhalma, Pécs, Székesfehérvár), and partly initiated some new projects (Aracs [Arača]; Bártfa [Bardejov]; Garamszentbenedek [Hronský Beňadik]; Ják; Lébény; Kassa [Košice]; Kolozsvár [Cluj-Napoca], Lőcse [Levoča]; Sopron; Vajdahunyad [Hunedoara], etc.). Of the restorations undertaken in Budapest, the most important was that of the coronation cathedral Church of Our Lady, better known as the Matthias Church, which was entrusted to Frigyes Schulek in 1874. In addition to medieval monuments, Henszlmann also turned his attention to Roman age ruins (the amphitheatre at Aquincum) and the built heritage of more recent times (the Rudas Baths). Henszlmann's name is also intricately linked to the launch of a programme

in the early 1880s to uncover and copy medieval murals, which became widely known primarily through the work of the drawing teacher József Huszka (1854–1934), who came from Sepsiszentgyörgy (Sfântu Gheorghe, Romania) and was active throughout Transylvania (and partly Upper Hungary) (Erdőfüle [Filia], Gelence [Ghelința], Homoródszentmárton [Mărtiniș], Sepsibesenyő [Pădureni], Székelyderzs [Dârjiu]. Initially, the major role in restoration was played by German and Austrian architects, especially Friedrich von Schmidt, but by the turn of the century, prestigious commissions were granted to Frigyes Schulek, Ferenc Schulcz, Imre Steindl and Ferenc Storno the Elder. In his official capacity, in 1876 Henszlmann published a book titled *A Brief Introduction to the Early Christian, Roman and Transitional Style Monuments of Hungary*. The frontispiece for the book was a photograph of the western facade and doorway to the Church in Ják, which became the emblem of the Commission in the twentieth century.

In the sixteen years he spent working for the Commission of Monuments, Imre Henszlmann never took charge of the restorations, but only gave his opinions, which reflected a very strong point of view. His starting point was often not the actual, historical state, but a supposed, stylistic period or a *theoretically* derived, normative aesthetic critique of the existing historical state. He was extremely stubborn in his views, and frequently came into conflict with the architects and with the other members of the Commission. In his opinions, it is not hard to discern the influence of the French architect, Viollet-le-Duc, who was Henszlmann's greatest role model and yardstick. In his view, the task of the National Commission of Monuments was to be vigilant when it came to style, and not to restore the actual historical state. His opinion, which elevated stylistic correctness above all other considerations, in combination with the euphoric political atmosphere of the approaching millennium (the 1896 celebration of one thousand years of the Hungarian nation), gave rise to architectural solutions that were far removed from reality, all designed to represent a romantically-driven national enthusiasm, the magnificent empire of Saint Stephen, and the illusion of the medieval Kingdom, when three seas washed Hungary's shores.

All this should not, of course, detract from his achievements. Even today, Imre Henszlmann is respected by art historians and conservationists as the man who gave birth to the idea of modern monument conservation, who laid the groundwork for its implementation, who set up a Commission which has operated uninterrupted for 142 years, and who saved the country's most important monuments for posterity.

(Terézia Kerny)